

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 156

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 145

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 156—Relative to the Itliong-Vera Cruz Memorial Bridge.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 2, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 156, Weber. Itliong-Vera Cruz Memorial Bridge.

This measure would designate the overpass on South Woodman Street that crosses State Route 54, also known as the Filipino American Highway, in the City of San Diego as the Itliong-Vera Cruz Memorial Bridge. The measure would request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost for appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong was a Filipino American labor leader who founded the Filipino Farm Labor Union (FFLU) in 1956. He was also a member of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). He was born in 1913 in the Pangasinan Province of the Philippines and immigrated to the United States in 1929. His first involvement in a labor strike was one year later in 1930. Itliong was a self-taught labor leader and was instrumental in leading protests in California and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, After he founded the FFLU, Larry Itliong became the assistant director of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) which eventually became the United Farm Workers (UFW). Itliong is viewed as “one of the fathers of the West Coast labor movement”; and

WHEREAS, On Sept. 8, 1965, Filipino farm workers, known as manongs, organized by Itliong began the grape strike that set the stage for the boycott that would lead César Chávez and thousands of farmworker families to create the nation’s pioneering agricultural labor union, the UFW; and

WHEREAS, Mexican and Filipino workers had been historically pitted against one another to suppress wages or break strikes. Yet Itliong approached César Chávez, then busy organizing the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). For the first time, Filipino and Mexican workers became “brothers,” eventually forming one organization — the UFWOC — with Itliong as an assistant director, one of several Filipino leaders on the executive board; and

WHEREAS, Larry Itliong resigned from the UFWOC in 1971 and dedicated the remainder of his life to improving the lives of retired Filipino farm workers, and to a wide variety of community and civic projects, many

of which were related to the Filipino American community. He died in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Philip Vera Cruz was a Filipino American labor leader, a farm worker, and a leader and activist for the Asian American civil rights movement. He was one of the founders of the AWOC, which later merged with César Chávez's NFWA and gave birth to the UFW. Philip Vera Cruz was a long-time vice president of the UFW; and

WHEREAS, Philip Vera Cruz was born in Ilocos Sur in the Philippines in 1904 and immigrated to the United States in 1926. Vera Cruz also worked in canneries and restaurants and attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, for a year. He joined the National Farm Labor Union which was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1950's. Along with Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz convinced César Chávez and Dolores Huerta's predominantly Mexican/Latino NFWA to join the Grape Strike and Boycott of 1965 demanding better pay and benefits; and

WHEREAS, One week later César Chávez and Dolores Huerta joined the strike that eventually brought an end to the unfair wages and benefits with a 300 mile pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento; and

WHEREAS, After Philip Vera Cruz resigned from the UFW in 1977, he remained loyal to the UFW and the unionizing movement and maintained his dignity as a Filipino American supporting his community and fighting for worker's rights. He affirmed an embodiment of internationalism and believed in serving the people instead of making profits. He died in 1994; and

WHEREAS, The contributions of Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz and other Filipino American farm workers were instrumental in starting the Grape Strike and Boycott of 1965; and

WHEREAS, Together the Filipino and Mexican farm laborers formed the United Farm Workers union (UFW), which would not have been as successful without this coalition of Filipino and Chicano workers coming together in unity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates the overpass on South Woodman Street that crosses State Route 54, also known as the Filipino American Highway, in the City of San Diego as the Itliong-Vera Cruz Memorial Bridge; and be it further

Resolved, That the Department of Transportation is requested to determine the cost of erecting the appropriate signs, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Director of Transportation and to the author for appropriate distribution.

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